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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/658,216	09/08/2003	Erik R. Swenson	02453.0022.NPUS00	2715
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HOWREY LLP C/O IP DOCKETING DEPARTMENT 2941 FAIRVIEW PARK DRIVE, SUITE 200 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22042-2924			EXAMINER PARK, JUNG H	
			ART UNIT 2619	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 12/31/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/658,216

Applicant(s)

SWENSON ET AL.

Examiner

Jung Park

Art Unit

2619

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 October 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-84 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-84 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Remark

1. This communication is considered fully responsive to the Amendment filed on 10/11/2007.
 - a. An objection to the drawing is withdrawn since it has being amended accordingly.
 - b. An objection to the claim is withdrawn since it has being amended accordingly.
 - c. The rejection under 112 2nd to claim 53 is withdrawn since it has being amended accordingly.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
3. Claims 1-52 and 81-84 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
 - a. In claim 1, 24, 81 and 83, what is mean by "proprietary control information?" It is not defined in the claim clearly.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-19, 21-44, 46-50, 81, and 83 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shankar et al. (US 2004/0066781, "Shankar").

Regarding claim 1, Shankar discloses a system for communicating control information over one or more backplane connections between two or more entities comprising:

- first logic (a logic, not shown, to process VLAN ID within MAC controller, see ¶.43) for storing the proprietary control information (storing information within packets, see fig.4 and 500 & 510 fig.5) within a layer of a packet above the physical layer (layer 2 packets, see fig.5); and
- second logic (a logic, not shown, to transfer the packet, see ¶.43 and fig.1-2) for communicating the packet, including the proprietary control information, over one or more of the connections (as shown in fig.1-2),
- wherein the proprietary control information (note: control information within packet shown in fig.5) either replaces or appears in the packet as at least a portion of one or more standard packet fields (source address can be supplied by the transmitting MAC; VLAN ID tag is inserted, see ¶.43).

Shankar does not explicitly disclose the limitation of "backplane". However, a backplane is a circuit board that connects several connectors in parallel to each other to make up a complete a computer system. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to use a backplane network system to insert some circuit cards into the backplane because of its convenient to install and replace and also reliability of the backplane system.

Regarding claim 2, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information is stored in at least a portion of one or more fields inserted into the packet by the first logic (store to determine if the incoming packet is addressed to a particular port, see ¶.42)."

Regarding claim 3, Shankar discloses, "wherein the first logic overwrites at least a portion of one or more pre-existing fields in the packet with the control information (source address can be supplied by the transmitting MAC, see ¶.43)."

Regarding claim 4, Shankar discloses, "wherein the two or more entities comprise a switch (fig.3), and the control information is proprietary to the switch (fig.5a-b)."

Regarding claim 5, Shankar discloses, "wherein the switch has ingress and egress ports (ports in fig.2)."

Regarding claim 6, Shankar discloses, "wherein the proprietary control information comprises an identifier of an ingress port of the switch at which the packet was received over a network (VLAN ID, see fig.6)."

Regarding claim 7, Shankar discloses, "wherein the proprietary control information comprises an identifier of an egress port of the switch at which the packet will or is expected to be transmitted over a network (egress port for transmitting, see ¶.33; VLAN IDs for ports, see ¶.34 and fig.5)."

Regarding claim 8, Shankar discloses, "wherein the proprietary control information comprises an indicator of whether or not one or more predetermined fields were present in the packet upon receipt thereof at the switch (fig.5 and ¶.34)."

Regarding claim 9, Shankar discloses, "wherein the one or more predetermined fields comprise a VLAN (¶.34)."

Regarding claim 10, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information is stored in layer two or higher of the packet according to the OSI reference model (layer 2, see fig.5 and ¶.62)."

Regarding claim 11, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information is stored in layer two of the packet according to the OSI reference model (layer 2, see fig.5 and ¶.62)."

Regarding claim 12, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information is stored in the MAC sub-layer of the packet (MAC, see ¶.43)."

Regarding claim 13, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information overwrites at least a portion of a VLAN stored in the MAC sub-layer of the packet (¶.42 and ¶.43)."

Regarding claim 14, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information overwrites at least a portion of source or destination addresses stored in the MAC sub-layer of the packet (SA and DA, see ¶.42)."

Regarding claim 15, Shankar discloses, "wherein the VLAN comprises op code and tag portions, and the first logic overwrites the op code portion of the VLAN with the control information (op-code and tag, see fig.5 and ¶.44)."

Regarding claim 16, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information comprises an identifier of the VLAN op code overwritten by the control information (op-code modified, see ¶.76)."

Regarding claim 17, Shankar discloses, "wherein the VLAN is the outer VLAN of a plurality of nested VLANs (fig.1)."

Regarding claim 18, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information comprises quality of service information for the packet (priority, fig.5 and ¶.67)."

Regarding claim 19, Shankar discloses, "wherein the quality of service information comprises an identifier of a queue for buffering the packet (buffer ...identifying, see ¶.11)."

Regarding claim 21, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information is communicated in-band over the one or more backplane connections (same channel/network is used for control information and data, see ¶.2)."

Regarding claim 22, Shankar discloses, "wherein the first logic derives at least a portion of the control information from a packet header (identify VLAN ID, see 905 fig.9), and deletes the packet header prior to communication of the packet over the one or more backplane connections (915 fig.9)."

Regarding claim 23, Shankar discloses, "third logic for re-creating at least a portion of the packet header from the control information after communication of the packet over the one or more backplane connections (925 and 930 fig.9)."

Regarding claim 24, it is a claim corresponding to claim 1 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claim 1.

Regarding claims 25-32, they are claims corresponding to claims 2-9, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

Regarding claim 33, Shankar discloses, "wherein the proprietary control information comprises an indicator of a state of the ingress port of the switch at which the packet was received (identifying ..., see ¶.11)."

Regarding claims 34-38, they are claims corresponding to claims 10-13 and 9, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

Regarding claim 39, Shankar discloses, "one or more fields comprise source or destination addresses (fig.5)."

Regarding claims 40-44 and 46-48, they are claims corresponding to claims 15-19 and 46-23, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

Regarding claims 49 and 50, they are claims corresponding to claim 6 and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claim 6.

Regarding claim 81, it is a claim corresponding to the mapping step in claim 53 and the storing and communication steps in claim 1 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1 and 53.

Regarding claim 83, it is a claim corresponding to claim 81 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claim 81.

6. Claims 20 and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shankar in view of Kalkunte et al. (US 2002/0012345, "Kalkunte").

Regarding claims 20 and 45, Shankar discloses, "wherein the control information comprises an indicator that the packet is a candidate for dropping (drop, see ¶.113)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to apply the method of drop packets taught by Kalkunte into the forwarding method of Shankar in order to maximize/optimize memory utilization based on ports.

7. Claims 51 and 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shankar in view of Williams (US 7031325, "Williams").

Regarding claims 51 and 52, Shankar lacks what Williams discloses, "third logic (MAC logic, see 780 fig.7) for maintaining a mode bit (op-code, see 780 fig.7) having first and second states (insert or modify, see 780 fig.7), wherein the first logic is configured to add one or more fields to the packet layer to accommodate the control information (insert VLAN tag, see 780 fig.7 and col.12, ln.2-12) if the mode bit is in the first state (without the VLAN tag, see 780 fig.7), and overwrite at least a portion of one or more pre-existing fields in the packet layer (modified, 780 fig.7) with the control information if the mode bit is in the second state (state for modifying, see 780 fig.7)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to apply the op-code examining method taught by Williams into the VLAN tagging engine disclosed by Shankar in order for the engine to operate in accordance with multiple protocols.

8. Claims 53-64 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shankar in view of Bare (US 2003/0142685, "Bare").

Regarding claim 53, Shankar discloses a system for performing load balancing over a plurality of backplane connections between two or more entities, the system comprising:

- first logic (a logic, not shown, to process VLAN ID within MAC controller, see ¶.43) for receiving a packet at a first entity (600 fig.6), mapping control information (identifying VLAN ID, see ¶.43) for the packet into one or more identifiers (identifiers in the packets, see fig.5) of one or more of a plurality of connections coupling the first entity to a second entity (PE 1-n, see fig.1), wherein the mapping occurs through a data structure (look-up table, see 610 fig.6); and

- second logic for communicating the packet (a logic, not shown, to transfer the packet, see ¶.43 and fig.1-2) over the identified one or more connections (as shown in fig.1-2).

Shankar does not explicitly disclose the limitation of "backplane connections", which was rejected in claim 1. Therefore, this claim is rejected for the same reasons and motivation set forth in the rejection of claim 1.

Shankar lacks what Bare discloses, "to achieve a desired a desired load balancing of packets over the plurality of backplane connections (load balancing, see ¶.28 and ¶.383)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to apply the load balancing protocols taught by Bare into the tagging engine of Shankar in order to optimize the utilization of available throughput in the network of switches.

Regarding claim 54, it is a claim corresponding to claims 4, 6, and 7 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 4, 6, and 7.

Regarding claim 55, Shankar discloses, "wherein the first logic comprises a LUT (look-up tables, see fig.4) for maintaining an association between ingress or egress ports (fig.4 and ¶.41), and egress ports associated with the backplane connections (ports, see fig.4 and ¶.41), and the first logic maps a particular ingress or egress ports into one or more backplane-associated egress ports through an access to the LUT (relationship of ports and tables, see ¶.50 and ¶.52)."

Regarding claim 56, Shankar discloses, "wherein the association is programmed into the LUT (¶.50 and ¶.52)."

Regarding claim 57, Shankar lacks what Bare discloses, "wherein the association is pre-determined to achieve a desired load balancing of packets over the plurality of backplane connections (load balancing, see ¶.28 and ¶.383)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to apply the load balancing protocols taught by Bare into the tagging engine of Shankar in order to optimize the utilization of available throughput in the network of switches.

Regarding claim 58, Shankar does not explicitly disclose, "wherein the two or more entities are each ASICs." ASIC is a chip that is custom designed for a specific application rather than a general-purpose chip such as a microprocessor. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to use ASIC within PE of Shankar in order to improve performance over general-purpose CPUs, because ASICs are "hardwired" to do a specific job and do not incur the overhead of fetching and interpreting stored instructions.

Regarding claim 59, it is a claim corresponding to claim 53 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claim 53.

Regarding claims 60-64, they are claims corresponding to claims 54-58, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

9. Claims 65-80, 82, and 84 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shankar in view of Lou et al. (US 7173935, "Lou").

Regarding claim 65, it is a claim corresponding to claim 1, except the limitations of "a first switch coupled to a second switch and having a greater number of ports than the second switch." However, Lou discloses, "a first switch coupled to a second switch and having a greater number of ports than the second switch (Lou, see col.30, ln.20-25)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to have a greater number of ports in a first switch taught by Lou into the VLANs of Shankar in order to implement different VLAN domains and to have backup ports in the first switch when the ports of the first switch are used as ingress ports.

Regarding claim 66, it is a claim corresponding to claim 4 and 6 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 4 and 6.

Regarding claim 67, it is a claim corresponding to claim 4 and 7 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 4 and 7.

Regarding claims 68-72, they are claims corresponding to claims 10-15, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

Regarding claim 73, it is a claim corresponding to claim 65 and is therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of claim 65.

Regarding claims 74-80, they are claims corresponding to claims 66-72, respectively and are therefore rejected for the similar reasons set forth in the rejection of the claims.

Regarding claims 82 and 84, Shankar discloses, "wherein the two or more entities comprise a switch", but lacks what Lou discloses, "the system further means for extending the number of ports of switch (col.30, ln.20-25)." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to have a means to extend the number of ports according to their needs in switch taught by Lou into the VLANs of Shankar in order to implement different VLAN domains and to have backup ports in the first switch.

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-84 have been considered but are not persuasive.

At pages 15-18, applicant argues that "it would not have been obvious to connect the Provide Edge (PE) device shown in Figs. 1-2 of Shankar with backplane connections."

In reply, applicant claims "communicating the packet over one or more of the backplane" and the Figures show the claim limitations when the PE devices within backplanes are connected for transmitting over the backplanes. Therefore, the examiner respectively disagrees.

At pages 19-20, applicant argues that Shankar fails to disclose "the control information by stating that VLAN ID tag is not control information."

In reply, any information in the header field in Fig.5 is considered as control information. Now the applicant claims "proprietary control information" which is not clearly defined in the amended claims and the VLAN ID and destination address are considered as the proprietary control information as shown in 605 Fig.6. Therefore, the examiner respectively disagrees.

At page 23, applicant argues that Shankar fails to disclose, "wherein the proprietary control information either replace or appears in the packet as at least a portion of one or more standard packet fields."

In reply, the newly added claim limitations are rejected in the related claims.

At page 24, with respect to claims 53 and 59, applicant argues that Bare teaches absolutely nothing about balancing loads over intra-switch connections."

In reply, applicant has never claimed "balancing loads over intra-switch connections." applicant claims, "load balancing of packets over the plurality of backplane connections." Therefore, the examiner respectfully disagrees.

Conclusion

11. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Contact Information

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jung Park whose telephone number is 571-272-8565. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri during 6:15-3:45.

Application/Control Number:
10/658,216
Art Unit: 2619

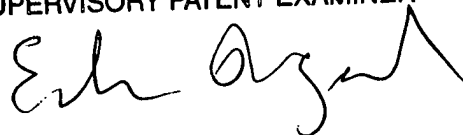
Page 16

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edan Orgad can be reached on 571-272-7884. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JP
Jung Park
Patent Examiner

EDAN . ORGAD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edan Orgad', written over the printed name and title.